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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON HIS MISSION OF GOOD OFFICES IN CYPRUS

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to the Security Council's request in paragraph 16 of its resolution 1117 (1997) of 27 June 1997. My report on those aspects of the resolution that relate to the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) was submitted to the Council on 8 December (S/1997/962). The present report refers to my good offices mission.

2. In a communication dated 17 April 1997 addressed to the President of the Council (S/1997/320), I stated my determination to pursue intensified efforts to bring about a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem and my hope that it would be possible to convene direct talks between the two community leaders. In the same communication I informed the Council that I had decided to appoint Mr. Diego Cordovez as my Special Adviser on Cyprus with effect from 28 April.

3. In the most recent communication on my good offices mission, dated 20 June 1997 (S/1997/480), I informed the Council that earlier that month I had written to the two leaders inviting them to a session of face-to-face discussions in July. I envisaged that the first session would be followed by another one in August and by a third one, if necessary.

4. The first round of talks was held at Troutbeck, Dutchess County, New York, from 9 to 12 July. In my opening statement at the talks I stated that for 29 years the leaders of the two communities had engaged in discussions about issues that had been identified as the most crucial. These discussions were based on concepts and approaches that successive Secretaries-General had put forward in accordance with Security Council resolutions. I stressed that the search for peace in Cyprus should therefore continue and noted that international backing for a negotiated solution was firmer than ever. The support of the Security Council had been consistently unequivocal and the presence at the talks of special envoys from a large number of countries was proof of the high priority that the international community attached to a viable and comprehensive solution.

5. The Troutbeck round of talks was held in a constructive and friendly atmosphere. The two leaders initiated the consideration of a draft statement intended to launch the process of negotiations that I had suggested, to set out the principles and objectives of the settlement and to establish the modalities

for future negotiations. The two leaders affirmed throughout the talks their determination to reach a settlement. They subsequently met in Nicosia with my Deputy Special Representative, Mr. Gustave Feissel, to consider humanitarian matters. An agreement to achieve progress on the issue of missing persons was concluded on 31 July.

6. The second round of talks was held at Glion-sur-Montreux, Switzerland, from 11 to 15 August. At the opening, the Turkish Cypriot leader informed my Special Adviser that, in the light of the publication by the European Union of a document entitled "Agenda 2000", and pending clarification of some of the statements contained in that document, he would participate in further discussions with the Greek Cypriot leader and with my Special Adviser but would not be able to adopt any formal understandings or agreements. Two further versions of the draft statement were considered but the talks ended inconclusively. In the circumstances, an early third round of talks would have been unproductive.

7. In discussions I had in New York with the leaders of the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot communities, on 6 October and 3 November, respectively, I urged both leaders to show their political will to reach a settlement and to make a special effort to see recent developments in a positive light. I also informed them that I had instructed Mr. Cordovez to travel to Nicosia in response to the invitations that the two leaders had extended to him at Glion.

8. My Special Adviser visited Nicosia from 18 to 21 November for consultations with the leaders of the two communities. He also met with the political party leaders of the two communities and was briefed by my Deputy Special Representative and Chief of Mission on the overall situation and by the Force Commander and senior officers of UNFICYP on the operation of the Force. Mr. Cordovez subsequently visited Athens, Ankara and London, the capitals of the three Guarantor Powers, and Brussels. At the request of the special representatives on Cyprus, on 27 November Mr. Cordovez participated in a meeting held in Paris. On 2 December Mr. Cordovez briefed the members of the Security Council on all the discussions held during his trip and explained the new factors and circumstances, which will undoubtedly have a bearing on my good offices mission in the months ahead.

9. The message that I asked Mr. Cordovez to convey to the two community leaders, and to the Governments of Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, was that I remained committed to continue my good offices mission at the earliest appropriate time, bearing in mind that the electoral process is now quite naturally engaging the priority attention of the Greek Cypriot leader and his community. Heads of Government and high-level officials of many interested Member States, who are thoughtfully following my endeavours in this context, have urged me to do so, and I continue to feel that to allow the present status quo, which is precarious, to continue would entail serious danger.

10. During the consultations in Cyprus Mr. Cordovez proposed, and the two community leaders agreed, that he should return to Nicosia in March 1998 in order to discuss the detailed modalities of a continuing process of negotiations and hopefully set it in motion. The Turkish Cypriot leader raised with

Mr. Cordovez questions regarding the status of the interlocutors at future talks. My Special Adviser noted that, in accordance with the mandate given to the Secretary-General by the Security Council, the mission of good offices on Cyprus was with the two communities, on an equal footing, and that the Secretary-General and all his representatives had been scrupulous in observing the political equality of the two communities and their leaders.

11. I remain convinced that it is essential to adopt new approaches and to ensure that the two community leaders will enter upon, as soon as possible, a continuing and sustained process of negotiations that will focus on the preparation of the actual legal instruments that will constitute the settlement.

12. I should like to place on record my appreciation to all those Governments that, given their interest in and concern about the Cyprus problem, have appointed special envoys in order to assist, and be kept informed of, my good offices mission. They have provided invaluable assistance and advice to my Special Adviser, who meets regularly with all of them for purposes of consultation and cooperation.